

# 1

## Preliminaries to translation as a process

### 1.1 BASIC DEFINITIONS

Text: Any given stretch of speech or writing assumed to make a coherent whole.

**\*\* A minimal text may consist of a single word.**

**\*\* A maximal text may run into thousands of pages.**

Source Text (ST): The text requiring translation.

Target Text (TT): The text, which is a translation of the ST.

Source Language (SL): The language in which the ST is spoken or written.

Target Language (TL): The language into which the ST is to be translated.

Strategy The translator's overall 'game-plan', consisting of a set of strategic decisions taken after an initial reading of the ST, but before starting detailed translation.

Strategic decisions: The first set of reasoned decisions taken by the translator before starting the translation in detail.

Decisions of detail: Reasoned decisions concerning the specific problems of grammar, lexis (vocabulary), etc., encountered in translating particular expressions in their particular context.

**\*\* The translation process can be broken down into two types of activity: understanding an ST and formulating a TT.**

### 1.2 INTER-SEMIOTIC TRANSLATION

Inter-Semiotic Translation: that is, translation between two semiotic systems (a semiotic system being a system for communication).

### 1.3 INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATION

Intralingual translation: sorts of linguistic response to linguistic stimuli, which are also very like translation proper, even though they actually take place within a single language.

Gist translation: which separates the gist of the message from all the circumstantial details and the tonal subtleties, and reports it in own words.

The other feature shared by intralingual translation and translation proper is that the **situation** in which a message is expressed, crucially affects both how it is expressed, and how it is received.

By 'situation' here, we mean a combination of three elements:

1. Linguistic context.
2. Non-linguistic circumstances.
3. The experiential baggage of the participants.

Exegetic translation: That involves explicitly in exegetic invoking considerations from outside the text in one's reading of it.

**\*\* We shall use the term exegetic translation to denote a translation that explains and elaborates on the ST in this way.**

### 1.4 INTERLINGUAL TRANSLATION

Interlingual Translation: In Arabic > English translation, which involve gisting are most likely to arise where the Arabic ST involves a high degree of repetition of meaning (i.e. semantic repetition).

## 2

# Preliminaries to translation as a product

## 2.1 DEGREES OF FREEDOM IN TRANSLATION

\*\* Two opposed degrees of freedom of translation, showing extreme SL bias on the one hand and extreme TL bias on the other.

### 2.1.1 Interlinear translation

At the extreme of SL bias is **interlinear translation**, where the TT does not necessarily respect TL grammar, but has grammatical units corresponding as closely as possible to every grammatical unit of the ST.

### 2.1.2 Literal translation

Interlinear translation is actually an extreme form of the much more common literal translation.

In literal translation proper, the denotative meaning of words is taken as if straight from the dictionary (that is, out of context), but TL grammar is respected. Because TL grammar is respected, literal translation very often unavoidably involves **grammatical transposition** – the replacement or reinforcement of given parts of speech in the ST by other parts of speech in the TT.

### 2.1.3 Free translation

At the opposite extreme, where there is maximum TL bias, is **free translation**.

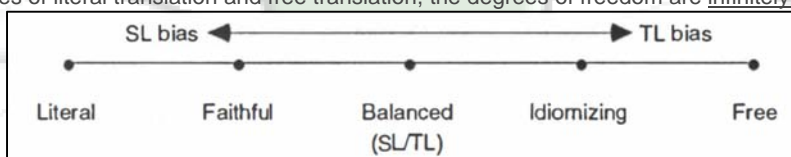
Here there is only a global correspondence between the textual units of the ST and those of the TT.

### 2.1.4 Communicative translation

A **communicative translation** is produced, when, in a given situation, the ST uses an SL expression standard for that situation, and the TT uses a TL expression standard for an equivalent target culture situation.

### 2.1.5 From interlinear to free translation

Between the two extremes of literal translation and free translation, the degrees of freedom are infinitely variable.



By an **idiomizing translation**, we mean one that respects the ST message content, but prioritizes TL 'naturalness' over faithfulness to ST detail; it will typically use **idioms** or familiar phonic and rhythmic patterns to give an easy read, even if this means sacrificing nuances of meaning or tone.

By '**idiom**' we mean a fixed figurative expression whose meaning cannot be deduced from the denotative meanings of the words that make it up.

\*\* Note that 'idiomizing' is not synonymous with 'idiomatic'

**Linguistic expression** that is unexceptional and acceptable in a given language in a given context.

## 2.2 EQUIVALENCE AND TRANSLATION LOSS

### 2.2.1 Equivalence

Descriptively, '**equivalence**' denotes the relationship between ST features and TT features that are seen as directly corresponding to one another, regardless of the quality of the TT.

Prescriptively, '**equivalence**' denotes the relationship between an SL expression and the canonic TL rendering of it as required.

**Back-translation**: that is translating a **TL** back into the **SL**)

### 2.2.2 Translation loss

**Translation loss:** is the incomplete replication of the ST in the TT - that is, the inevitable loss of textually and culturally relevant features.

**Note:** There is significant translation loss on the **phonic** and **prosodic** levels. It is likely no matter. But if the ST word is part of an alliterative pattern in a literary text, or, worse if it rhymes, the loss could be crucial.

#### 2.2.2. 1 Translation by omission

The most obvious form of translation loss is when something that occurs in the ST, is simply omitted from the TT.

#### 2.2.2.2 Translation by addition

Translation by addition is translation in which something is added to the IT which is not present in the ST.

#### 2.2.2.3 Controlling translation loss

Control and channel the translation loss by deciding which features, in a given ST, it is most important to respect, and which can most legitimately be sacrificed in respecting them.



# 3

## Cultural transposition

### 3.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES

**Cultural transposition:** for the main types and degrees of departure from literal translation that one may resort to in the process of transferring the contents of an ST from one culture to another.

### 3.2 EXOTICISM

The extreme options in signalling cultural foreignness in a TT fall into the category of **exoticism**

### 3.3 CALQUE

A **calque** is an expression that consists of TL words and respects TL **syntax**, but is unidiomatic in the TL because, it is modelled on the structure of an SL expression.

### 3.4 CULTURAL TRANSPLANTATION

At the opposite end of the scale from exoticism is **cultural transplantation**, whose extreme forms are hardly translations at all, but more like adaptations - the wholesale transplanting of the entire setting of the ST, resulting in the entire text being rewritten in an indigenous target culture setting.

### 3.5 CULTURAL BORROWING

**Cultural borrowing:** The first alternative is to transfer an ST expression verbatim into the TT.

- It introduces a foreign element into the TT.
- Cultural borrowing does not involve adaptation of the SL expression into TL forms.
- Output of Cultural Transplantation: In the entire text being rewritten in an indigenous target culture setting.

### 3.6 COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION

**Communicative translation** is normal in the case of culturally conventional formulae where literal translation would be inappropriate.

### 3.7 TRANSLITERATING NAMES

The issues involved in cultural transposition are well illustrated in the **transliteration** of names.

- In **transliterating** Arabic names, it is possible to follow either one of a number of more or less standard transliteration systems or to adopt a more ad hoc approach.
- The advantage of a **transliteration** system is that it allows the reader to **reconvert the English back into Arabic script**.
- The use of **transliteration** systems is generally limited to **academic translations**.
- The use of a transliteration system in other cases **may give a stronger sense** of the exotic than is appropriate for the context.

# 4

## Compensation

### 4.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES

**Compensation:** That is, mitigating the loss of important ST features by approximating their effects in the TT through means other than those used in the ST.

- In other words, one type of translation loss is palliated by the deliberate introduction of another.
- The boundary between compensation and constraint is more clearly seen in communicative translations.  
Additional Details:
- In principle, where there is no choice, there is constraint, not compensation.
- Once a rendering has entered the bilingual dictionary as a conventional lexical equivalent, using it is not a case of compensation.
- If the conventional translation is modified in order to palliate the loss, this may well be a case of compensation.

### 4.2 CATEGORIES OF COMPENSATION

**Remember:**

- Most cases of compensation belong to more than one category.
- The most important thing is to agonize over what label to give to an instance of compensation, but to be clear what loss it compensates for and how it does so.
- How to compensate can never be considered in isolation from other crucial factors: context, style, genre, the purpose of the ST and the TT.
- \* **Compensation application:** Needed whenever consideration of these factors confronts the translator with inevitable, while it's unwelcome compromise.

\* **Compensation in kind:** That is usually entails a difference in kind between the ST textual effect and the TT textual effect.

- It may involve making explicit what is implicit in the ST, or implicit what is explicit.
- Denotative meaning may have to replace connotative meaning, and vice versa.
- It may involve substituting concrete for abstract, or abstract to concrete.
- It nearly always involves different parts of speech and syntactic structure from those indicated by literal translation.
- Compensation in kind, might involve replacing a piece of Classical Arabic poetry by an analogous piece of English poetry.
- An ST pun may have to be replaced with a different form of word play.

\* **Compensation in place:** It is usually entails change of place, the TT textual effect occurring at a different place, relative to the other features in the TT, from the corresponding textual effect in the ST.

- Compensation very often involves both change in kind and change in place.

\* **Compensation by splitting:** involves a change in 'economy', ST features being spread over a longer length of TT.

\*\*\* The distinction between **compensation in kind**, **compensation in place** and **compensation by splitting** is a rough-and-ready categorization.

- **Compensation is a matter of choice and decision. It is the reduction of an unacceptable translation loss through the calculated introduction of a less unacceptable one.**

- **Compensation is a matter of conscious choice, and is unlikely to be successful if left purely to inspiration.**

# 5

## Denotative Meaning and Translation Issues

### 5.1 DENOTATIVE MEANING

**Denotative meaning** is that kind of meaning which is fully supported by ordinary semantic conventions. (Such as the convention that 'window' refers to a particular kind of aperture in a wall or roof)

- Translation is concerned with meaning.
- '**Meaning**' is elastic and indeterminate, especially when applied to a whole text.
- **Denotative meaning** (also known as '**cognitive**', '**propositional**' or '**literal**' meaning).

#### 5.1.1 Synonymy

- Denotative meaning is a matter of categories into which a language divides the totality of communicable experience.
- To define a denotative meaning is to specify a 'range' covered by a word or phrase (in the relevant sense) in such a way that one knows what items are included in that range or category and what items are excluded.
- Comparison of denotative meanings can also be made between expressions from two or more different languages.

#### 5.1.2 Hyperonymy-hyponymy

- **Hyperonymy-hyponymy** an expression with a wider, less specific, range of denotative meaning is a **hyperonymy**.
- An expression with a narrower, more specific range of denotative meaning is a **hyponym** of one with a wider meaning.
- Hyperonymy-hyponymy is so widespread in all languages that one can say that the entire fabric of linguistic reference is built up on such relationships.

#### 5.1.3 Particularizing translation and generalizing translation

**Particularizing translation:** Translating by a hyponym implies that the TT expression has a narrower and more specific denotative meaning than the ST expression.

- Particularizing translation is acceptable if the TL offers no suitable alternative and if the added detail does not clash with the overall context of the ST or TT.
- Particularizing translation is not acceptable if the 1L does in fact offer a suitable alternative to the additional detail, or if the added detail clashes with the overall context of ST or TT.

**Generalizing translation:** Translating by a hyperonymy implies that the TT expression has a wider and less specific denotative meaning than the ST expression.

- Generalization is acceptable if the TL offers no suitable alternative and the omitted detail is either unimportant in the ST or is implied in the TT context.
- Generalizing is **not** acceptable if the TL does offer suitable alternatives, or if the omitted details are important in the ST but not implied or compensated for in the TT context.

#### 5.1.4 Partially overlapping translation

**Partial overlap** is common and often unavoidable. It can apply to single words as well as to phrases or whole sentences.

- When the TL offers no suitable alternatives, partial overlap is acceptable if the **omitted** detail is unimportant or is implied in the overall TT context, and if the **added** detail does not clash with the overall ST or TT contexts.
- Partial overlap is unacceptable if the **omitted** detail is important in the ST but is not implied in the overall context of the TT, or if the **added** detail clashes with the overall ST or TT contexts.
- If the TL **does not** offer suitable alternatives, then only compensation can counteract the **omission** or **addition**.

### 5.2 SEMANTIC REPETITION IN ARABIC

- Arabic frequently makes use repetition of synonyms or near-synonyms, in a way which is not normally found in English. This kind of repetition is sometimes called **semantic repetition**.



- **Semantic repetition** is of two basic kinds:

(1) Where the two words or phrases used have closely-related but distinguishable meanings.

(2) where the words or phrases used are fully synonymous or, at least in the context in which they are being used, there is no clear difference in meaning.

- Semantic repetition may involve any of the major parts of speech: nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs.

- Semantic repetition may be syndetic, i.e. it may involve the use of a **connective**.

## 6

# Connotative meaning and translation issues

### 6.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES

**Connotative meanings:** that is, associations, which, over and above the denotative meaning of an expression, form part of its overall meaning.

### 6.2 ATTITUDINAL MEANING

**Attitudinal meaning** is that part of the overall meaning of an expression, which consists of some widespread *attitude to the referent*.

- The expression does not merely denote the referent in a neutral way, but also hints at some attitude to it.

### 6.3 ASSOCIATIVE MEANING

**Associative meaning** is that part of the overall meaning of an expression, which consists of expectations that are - rightly or wrongly - *associated with the referent* of the expression.

### 6.4 AFFECTIVE MEANING

**Affective meaning** is an *emotive effect worked on the addressee* by the choice of expression, and which forms part of its overall meaning.

### 6.5 ALLUSIVE MEANING

**Allusive meaning** is an intertextual feature. It occurs when an expression evokes an associated saying or quotation in such a way that the meaning of that saying or quotation becomes part of the overall meaning of the expression.

### 6.6 COLLOCATION AND COLLOCATIVE MEANING

'**Collocation**' is an occurrence of one word in close proximity with another.

**Collocative meaning** is the meaning given to an expression over and above its denotative meaning by the meaning of some other expression with which it collocates to form a commonly used phrase.

### 6.7 REFLECTED MEANING

**Reflected meaning** is the meaning given to an expression over and above the denotative meaning, which it has in that context by the fact that it also calls to mind another meaning of the same word or phrase.

### 6.8 OTHER TYPES OF CONNOTATIVE MEANING

There are three major additional types of connotative meaning. These are **Emphasis**, presentation of information as predictable or unpredictable, and presentation of information as foregrounded or backgrounded. **Predictability** and **Unpredictability** are typically a function of the formal properties of theme and rheme, while foregrounding and backgrounding are a typically a function of the formal features of mainness and subordination.